DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 169 942 IR 007 229

AUTHOR	Phinney, Joanna; And Others
TITLE	Hairy Scary. Children's Fears: Face Them. Student Guide--Footsteps. Report Number 16.
INSTITUTION	Applied Management Sciences, Inc., Silver Spring, Md.; Educational Film Center, Springfield, Va.; Maryland Univ., College Park. Inst. for Child Study.
SPONS AGENCY	Bureau of School Systems (DHEW/OE), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	79
NOTE	17p.; For related documents, see IR 007 212-233 and IR 007 396; Best copy available
AVAILABLE FROM	University Park Press, 233 East Redwood Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21202 (Student Guide Kit, one of each program, 1-20, $5.95 per kit); Reference Section, National Audiovisual Center, General Services Administration, Washington, D.C. 20409 (Films and tapes only)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Child Development; Child Rearing; *Early Childhood; *Educational Television; Family Life Education; *Fear; Parent Child Relationship; *Parenthood Education; Psychological Needs

ABSTRACT

This student guide for a program concerned with some of the fears young children have, and how their parents can help them cope with these fears, is designed around a magazine format to allow maximum flexibility to different groups using the materials. The guide is divided into seven sections: (1) an overview of the theme and contents; (2) a summary of the major learnings of the theme; (3) feature articles containing the major content and including practical suggestions for parents; (4) a film review section which includes a synopsis of the accompanying film program and a related discussion question; (5) three activities aimed at both individual and group participation; (6) a selection of field activities, discussion questions, and research topics designed to reinforce the ideas presented in the articles and meet the needs of a wide variety of classroom groups; and (7) a bibliography for further reading on the theme. (Author/JEG)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

CHILDREN'S FEARS: FACE THEM

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

Hairy Scary

Student Guide

MICROFICHE ONLY

ED169942

IR007229

footsteps

A world to be born under your footsteps...
St.-John Perse

FROM THE EDITORS

Every child has fears at one time or another. It's a good thing, too, for fear plays an important role in life. Without fear, a child could get hurt. Fears help a child to be cautious, to approach a strange dog or cross a street with care.

Yet we do not want children to become so fearful that they live in fear. We don't want them to avoid all dogs or streets because they could be dangerous. We don't want them to doubt their abilities to deal with new situations.

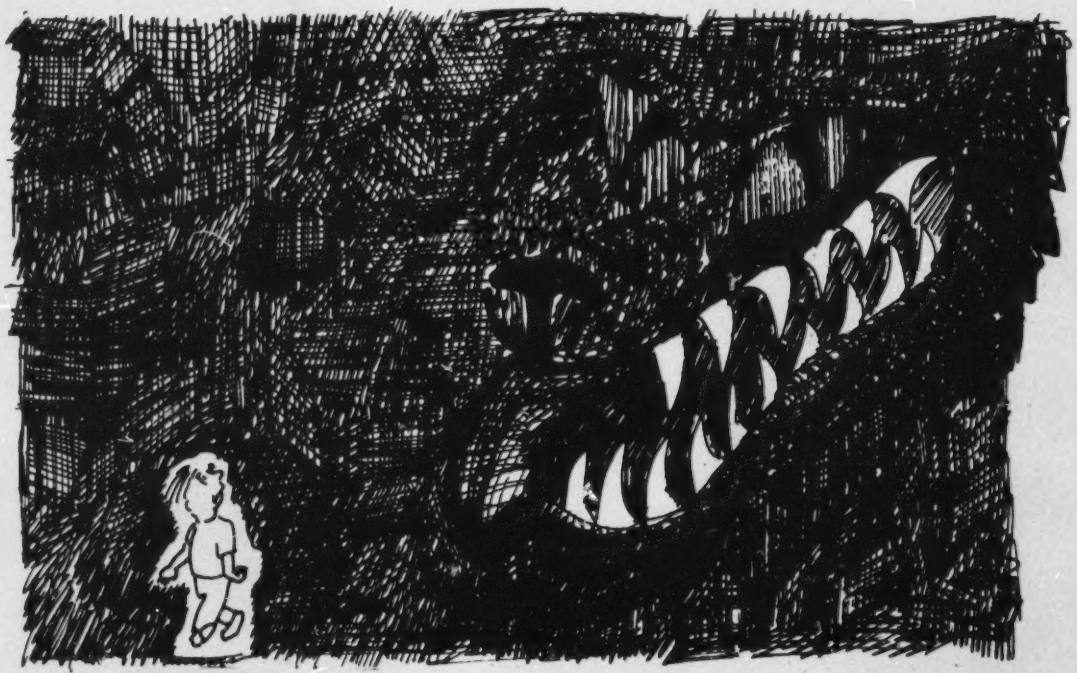
This booklet describes some of the fears that young children have. It suggests reasons why children become afraid and ways their parents can help them face and overcome these fears.

CONTENTS

The Big Ideas 2
Fears: Through the Child's Eyes 3
Fears: Combating Them Together 6
Film Review Section 9
Activity Pages 10
Grab Bag 13
Book Browsing 14

THE BIG IDEAS

- Fears are a normal part of growing up.
- Some childhood fears are caused by actual objects or events; others are imaginary. Both kinds are real to the child.
- Parents help their children cope with fears by accepting them as real and helping children find ways to face them.



. . . deep inside,
in that silent place
where a child's fears crouch. . .

— Lillian Smith

FEARS:
Through the Child's Eyes

And sometimes in my bunk bed I start thinking
maybe a fiend sneaked into my lower bunk.
And he's sniffing around for a boy to eat,
and I'm the boy that he's sniffing, and...

—Judith Viorst
My Mama Says There Aren't Any Zombies, Ghosts, Vampires, Creatures, Demons, Monsters, Fiends, Goblins, or Things
(New York: Atheneum, 1977)

The world can be a scary place for young children.

Things that seem perfectly safe to us look dangerous and harmful to small children. Their fears may seem ridiculous to us, but they are dreadfully real to children.

Try to see the world through a child's eyes and you can understand why some situations are frightening and why all children are afraid now and then.

A FEARSOME BEGINNING

During the first three years, life brings one surprise after another:

To a newborn baby, everything is new, and perhaps a bit uncertain.

Imagine how it must feel to have your hair washed for the first time. Just think how startling the roar of the vacuum cleaner or the barking of a dog must sound to a baby.

Babies work hard at making sense of these new experiences. They learn to recognize certain places, special people, typical sounds and regular happenings. When things happen in the usual way, they feel safe and secure. They adjust to dogs, bells and buzzers in their own home.

When the pattern changes, however, they are undone. Unfamiliar people and new situations can be very upsetting. Even familiar people may confuse a baby by changing their appearance:

I went to get Benjy up, as usual. When I changed his diapers, he was just as cheerful and full of smiles as he could be. I carried him to the bathroom to see his Dad, who'd just lathered up and started to shave. Then, the strangest thing happened. Benjy took one look at his father and became absolutely terrified. He clutched me, screamed and hid his face against me. At breakfast he gurgled and smiled at his father again. I just don't know what to make of it.

A child's own father becomes a monster when shaving cream covers his face. Even Mother can become a stranger in a new hat. They appear this way because babies — even preschoolers — tend to pay attention to only one aspect of an object or a person at a time. A child's way of thinking is often so different from an adult's that it's terribly confusing.

AWARE AND WARY

Toddlers are much more aware of the world around them, but they're still a bit wary about things we take for granted:

> Toddlers are just beginning to sense their size and limitations. They realize that they can get hurt.

And they try to protect themselves from the dangers that they see befalling others — both living and non-living things.

It's hard for them to judge whether they are safe. They see dog food being eaten by the dog. Will he eat them? They see the toilet swallow the toilet paper. Will they be swallowed too? They watch the vacuum cleaner suck up dirt. Will it eat them up too? Even the most ordinary experiences can hold a certain kind of terror:

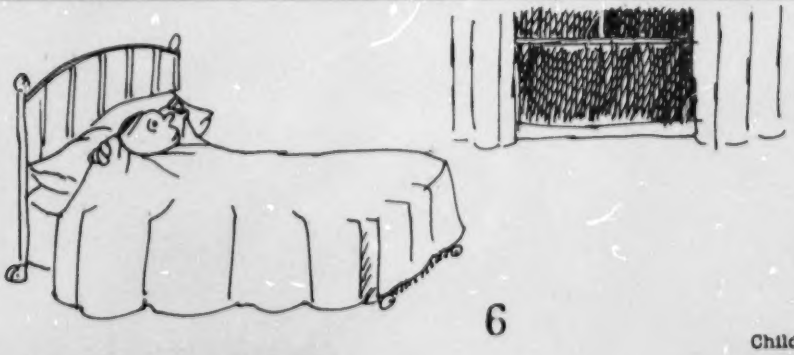
> *At first, my daughter Bonnie loved the beauty parlor. She twirled the chairs, looked in the mirror and charmed everyone. When her turn came and she saw the scissors, however, her eyes grew big with fear. As the scissors snipped and her hair fell on the floor, she began to panic.*

IMAGINING THE WORST

Preschool children are apt to develop a new set of fears:

> By age three or so, children are comfortable with "what is," but they worry about what "could happen."

> *The other night when I went in to check on Danny, I found him wide awake. He looked exhausted, but as if he were fighting sleep. And he pulled the sheet over his head so all I could see was his face! When I asked him why, he said he was afraid a bee would fly in and sting him.*



These children are just beginning to use their imaginations. Because of this, they become afraid of many things they once accepted calmly. It is difficult for them to separate what is real from what is imagined. They imagine dangers such as ghosts, robbers, monsters and wild beasts. They anticipate disasters such as accidents, wars or death.

In their imaginations preschoolers create a magical world. They invent rigid rules to stay unharmed. They want you to tuck in their sheets so monster mice can't eat them, or put a bandaid on a scratch to stop the blood from "leaking" out. If they say they hate you and are "going to kill you dead," they may worry later that you will die.

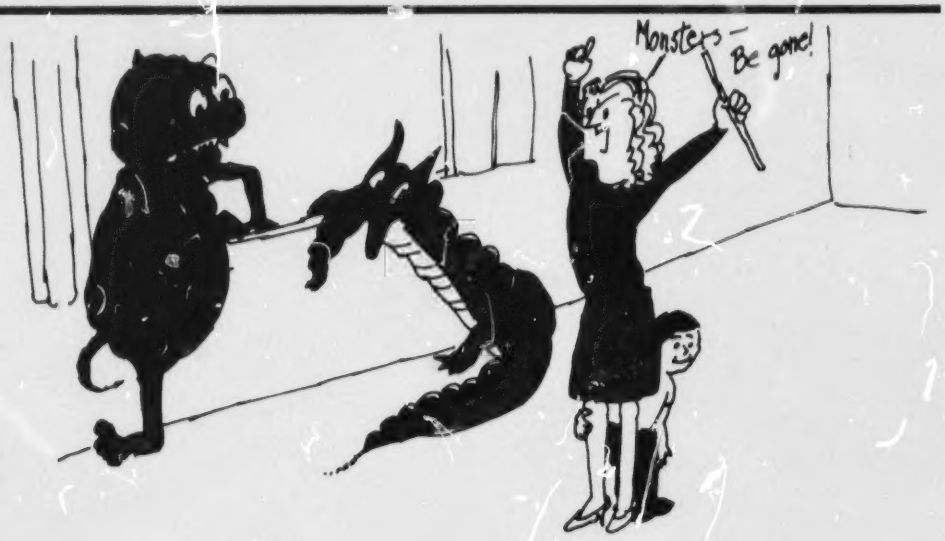
All of a sudden, a child may become afraid of the dark and troubled by nightmares. For the first time, a child may worry about something "happening" to his or her body.

Gregg and I were talking about the things we were afraid of when we were children. He couldn't believe my fears. . .

I remember spitting watermelon seeds out back with my best friend. We had contests seeing who could spit the farthest. Then it happened. I swallowed a watermelon seed and it went down inside me. I coughed, but it didn't come out. Sonjie said a watermelon tree would grow inside. I was terrified to eat after that, because I thought the food would make the watermelon tree grow.

Most children have fears some time during their early years. The way they learn to cope with these fears makes a big difference. It determines how much control fear has over a child and how much control the child has over himself.

FEARS:
Combating Them Together



Children have different ways of overcoming their fears.

Some children need to learn all about the situations they fear.

It helps to take a special trip to the dentist's office, climb up in the chair, and touch a few of the tools that the dentist will put in their mouths. Observing and reading about the new guinea pig may convince them that he isn't dangerous and he won't hurt.

Some children need to control the frightening objects or situations themselves.

When they turn the vacuum cleaner on and off or flush the toilet themselves, their fear may go away. When they turn the light switch on, the room seems less scary.

Still other children use their imaginations to combat fear.

Pretending to bark and act like a dog can help these children overcome a fear of dogs. Pretending to hunt lions and lock them in a closet may make them feel safe enough to go to sleep.

And, of course, it always helps to share a fear with a parent.

It feels good to talk about a scary event. Talking lets the fear out. Talking together brings a feeling of safety in.

A FRIEND IN FEAR

To a child, grown-ups have a magic all their own. They can forbid lions to sleep under the bed and send them back to the zoo. They can rescue their child from a nightmare and bring him or her back to earth, bed and safety. The fact is, children believe in their parents. They are impressed by parents' courage and peace of mind in the face of such dangers.

Because children have such faith in their parents, parents can help them express and overcome their fears. But, parents also have the power to intensify their children's fears. The way parents respond when children are afraid is very important: some ways are helpful; others don't help at all.

WHEN CHILDREN BECOME AFRAID . . .

DON'T	*DO*
Laugh at children's fears Statements such as "Don't be a sissy — boys aren't afraid of the dark" only shame children and make them doubt their own feelings.	**Accept their fears as real** Acknowledging "Sometimes darkness can be scary — do you want a flashlight?" lets them know its OK to have and to express fears.
Force them into a situation they fear When children are afraid of washing down the drain, making them stay in the tub only intensifies their fear.	**Remove them from the fearful situation, then talk about it** Take children out of the tub, but show them that their toys won't wash down the drain.
Ignore children's fears Telling children that the booster shot won't hurt makes them deal with fears all alone. They may repress and never work out the fear.	**Help them confront fears** Talk about how the shot feels. Pretend to give each other shots. Expressing and acting out fears helps children feel they have some control.
Transmit personal fears to children When a parent is afraid of mice, children sense it. Often they adopt their parents' fears.	**Give them chances to watch other people interact confidently with things they fear** Watching another child handle a pet mouse often does more than words to help children lose their fear of mice.

FEARS IN THE NIGHT

Sometimes fears do not surface when people are awake. Fears may be repressed during the day and emerge in nightmares. Although people of all ages have an occasional bad dream, nightmares affect children most. Nightmares seem to peak between the ages of 4 and 6.

Parents in all cultures face the problem of how to help their children who are having nightmares. Most parents hold and comfort their children when they're having a bad dream. They encourage children to talk about it. For example, the Senoi parents in Malaysia encourage their children to share their dreams with the whole family. The family helps the child think of a way to fight the enemies in his dream. They tell the child to fight the tiger who's chasing him. Or, if he dreams he's falling, they tell him to fly.

One American mother whose daughter was being haunted by a scary monster each night finally brought a stick into the daughter's room. "Pretend this is a magic wand," she said. "You wave it and say ***Monsters, be gone***."

There are fears within us all. Parents cannot prevent their children's fears, but they can help them face those fears. Children need an ally.

Daddy in the Dream

I was chased by a gang.
I screamed.

"I'm scared!"
Daddy came and carried me on his back.
Daddy was taller than a mountain.
He was wearing a straw hat.
His shadow covered two or
three mountains.

— Yamaguchi Masayo, 6
From: *There Are Two Lives.*
Richard Lewis and Haruna Kimura. New York:
Simon and Schuster, 1970.

FILM REVIEW SECTION

Hairy Scary

Allison has suddenly developed a fear of bearded men — the exterminator, a salesman and even her adored Uncle Bumpo. Jeannie and Amos don't understand where this fear has come from. They try as best they can, however, to help Allison overcome it. For example, Jeannie tells Allison not to be afraid. She tries to get Bumpo to stay for dinner so that Allison can get used to his beard. She talks to Allison about the fear. She asks Bumpo to shave. Finally, when Amos arrives home from a business trip, he brings a fake beard for Allison and Chris to play with. By the end of the film it seems as if Allison has finally overcome her fear of beards.

WHAT DO YOU THINK HELPED ALLISON MOST?

ACTIVITY PAGES

activity #1
FEARS ON FILE

Write up a case history of your own childhood fears. Talk to your parents about the fears that you had as a young child:

What were they?

What might have caused them?

What did your parents do that helped you cope with these fears?

What did they do that didn't help?

Do you still have these fears?

If so, how do you cope with them?

If not, what made the fears go away?

How did you know when the fears were gone?

How did you feel?

activity #2
ORDINARY FEARS

Even ordinary things and events can be frightening to a young child. Try to take a child's point of view and describe how each of the following situations might appear.

a dog eating food

a vacuum cleaner

thunder and lightning

a cut on the arm

a toilet flushing

a kidnapping shown on TV

the dark

the water

activity #3
HELP RON GET A JOB

Ron Davis has heard that day care centers are particularly interested in hiring male teachers, and he has contacted the director of a day care center near him and arranged to have an interview.

During the interview the director asks Ron what he would do if certain situations arose in the classroom and why. For each of the following situations, tell Ron how he should respond if he wants to get the job.

Ricky, age 2½, has a nightmare during nap time.

3-year-old Pamela screams when other children put on their Halloween costumes.

5-year-old Stacey refuses to go in the water at the local swimming pool.

4-year-old Peter clings to his teacher when the guinea pig is taken out of its cage.

When Sammy sees the equipment in the room where he is to have a hearing test, he refuses to go in.

GRAB BAG

1. Interview 3 preschool children from a day care center, Head Start Center, nursery school, family day care home, or your home or neighborhood. Come to each interview prepared with paper, magic markers or crayons, and spend at least 15 minutes with each child.
   Ask each child to tell you a story or make a picture of something scary that happened to him or her:

   If the child chooses to tell a story, write it down in the child's own words.
   If the child draws a picture, ask the child to tell you about the picture, and write the child's comments on the back of the picture.

   Afterwards, share the children's stories and discuss them with your classmates. Do you think their stories were true or imagined?
2. Invite a child psychiatrist or child psychologist to your classroom to talk about the differences between normal childhood fears and phobias.
3. Spend one Saturday morning watching cartoons:

   What kinds of childhood fears are incorporated into cartoons to draw children's attention?
   Do these cartoons prey on children's fears, make fun of children, or help them?
4. Use one art form such as photography, dance, music, drawing or painting to illustrate either young children's or your own fears. Display or perform your work for the class.
5. Conduct a poll in your school to find out what fears are most common. Why do you think these fears are the most common among students in your school?

to discuss

1. How do you deal with your own fears? Are you any more or less afraid if there's no real basis for your fear? Do you feel silly or upset if your fears are irrational? Why?
2. How do you think the following Ethiopian proverbs relate to the topic of childhood fears?

   He who conceals his disease cannot expect to be cured.
   Unless you call out, who will open the door?
3. Sometimes adults use fear to discipline children. They may say, for instance: "If you run away from me in the grocery store one more time, I'm going to leave you there." Or: "If you're not quiet, the Bogeyman will get you."
   Set up a classroom debate on the pros and cons of using fear to discipline children.
4. Will children with childhood fears become cowards?
5. How are adult fears incorporated into adult TV shows to draw a large TV audience? Are you attracted or repelled when fear is a strong element of a program?
6. How can adults teach children about danger without instilling fear in them?
7. One great man said ". . . the only thing we have to fear is fear itself." Who said this and what did he mean? Does this quote contradict or support the ideas presented in this unit?

to research

1. The effect of TV violence on children's fears.
2. How our bodies respond to fear (for example, our nervous and cardiovascular systems).
3. Find 3 children's stories that deal with common childhood fears such as body injury, fear of the dark, separation from parents, monsters or wild animals. Write a short paragraph on the technique used in each book to help a child cope with fear.
4. How fear can be used to motivate groups of people. For instance, how was fear used to form mass movements such as the Nazi movement? (*A True Believer*, by Eric Hoffer, and *Escape from Freedom*, by Erich Fromm, are possible sources for this project.)
5. The use of fear in fairy tales. Do fairy tales help young children work out their fears or add to them? (See *The Uses of Enchantment* by Bruno Bettelheim).
6. The different between fear and anxiety.

BOOK BROWSING

Here are some books that will give you more information on children's fears...

The Child Under Six. James L. Hymes, Jr. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 2d ed., 1974.

Children and Fear. Stephen Joseph. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1977.

Children's Fears. Benjamin Wolman. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1978.

Fears of Children. Helen Ross. Write to: Science Research Associates, Inc., 1540 Page Mill Road, Palo Alto, California 94304 (booklet)

The Magic Years. Selma Fraiberg. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959. (paperback)

Your Child From One to Six. Richard H. Granger. Order from: Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 (paperback)

Curriculum Development
PRIMARY AUTHOR: Joanna Phinney, Ed.M.
CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS: Sharon Barry, Ed.M.
Laura Dittmann, Ph.D.
Robert Huebner, Ph.D.

Content Development
DIRECTORS: Laura Colker, M.A.
Charles Flatter, Ed.D.
TECHNICAL CONSULTANTS: Laura Dittmann, Ph.D.
Robert Huebner, Ph.D.
John Kurtz, Ph.D.
Bonnie Tyler, Ph.D.
Martin Bloom, M.A.

Design & Illustration Sheila Humphreys

FOOTSTEPS was developed by a consortium of:

Applied Management Sciences
Silver Spring, Maryland

Educational Film Center
Springfield, Virginia

Institute for Child Study of the University of Maryland
College Park, Maryland

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people — staff, students, teachers and parents — contributed to the development of these materials. Two people in particular, however, deserve special recognition and thanks: Sharon McIntyre, for her tireless efforts field testing the materials; and June Hamning, for patiently typing — and retyping — these pages.

We also wish to gratefully acknowledge the ongoing support of the Division of Educational Technology, U.S. Office of Education, without whose assistance these materials would not be possible.

© 1979 Applied Management Sciences

Published by

University Park Press
International Publishers in Science, Medicine, and Education
233 East Redwood Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Copyright is claimed until 1984. Thereafter all portions of this work covered by this copyright will be in the public domain. During the period of copyright all rights, including that of translation into other languages, reserved. Photomechanical reproduction (photocopy, microcopy) of this book or parts thereof without special permission of the publisher is prohibited.

This work was developed under a contract with the Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Education, the United States Office of Education, Department of Health, Education and Welfare. However, the content does not necessarily reflect the position or policy of that Agency and no official endorsement of these materials should be inferred.